

## Message Text

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46

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-13

JUSE-00 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SNM-02 SY-10 TRSE-00 USIA-15

NSC-10 SCI-06 OMB-01 SS-15 L-03 H-03 PRS-01 PA-03

PM-07 DODE-00 RSR-01 /142 W

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R 021344Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8125

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

GOV PAN CANAL

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

CONFIDENTIAL PANAMA 4070

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR PN PQ

SUBJ: NARCOTICS: PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE NARCOTICS CONTROL ACTION PLAN.

SUMMARY. PANAMA MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT AND CONTROL MATTERS DURING JULY. GENERAL OMAR TORRIJOS SENT A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COURT OF JUSTICE AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OUTLINING HIS GOVERNMENT'S HARD-LINE POLICY AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS. THE GOP MADE PLANS FOR NEW AND TIGHTER LAWS TO CONTROL DRUGS AND ESTABLISHED A NATIONAL PLAN TO CONTROL DRUG ABUSE AND ARRESTED A NUMBER OF KNOWN NARCOTICS VIOLATORS AND SENTENCED THEM TO TWO YEARS' IMPRISONMENT UNDER "ANTI-SOCIAL LAW". THIS PROGRESS IS TESTIMONY TO EFFECTIVENESS OF JOINT U.S.-PANAMANIAN COOPERATION DURING PAST YEAR. WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN MAKING PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS AWARE OF PANAMA'S NARCOTIC PROBLEM AND OF THE NECESSITY FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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COMBATTING IT. PANAMANIAN ENFORCEMENT CAPABILITY HAS DEVELOPED DURING PAST YEAR AND THEY ARE NOW TAKING THE INITIATIVE IN INVESTIGATIONS AND ARRESTS.

1. PANAMANIAN LEADERS ISSUE TOUGH INSTRUCTIONS RE NARCOTICS VIOLATORS: DURING JULY A DEA AGENT OBTAINED COPY OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY GENERAL OMAR TORRIJOS, PANAMA'S CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT TO PANAMA'S ATTORNEY GENERAL AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COURT OF JUSTICE CONCERNING HIS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON PROSECUTION OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS. HE EXPRESSED DETERMINATION TO "STOP THIS UNSCRUPULOUS COMMERCE AND ASSIST THOSE COUNTRIES CONCERNED WITH ERADICATION OF THIS FILTHY BUSINESS." IN THE APPREHENSION AND PROSECUTION OF TRAFFICKERS, HE WROTE THAT HE PREFERRED "EXCESSIVE ZEAL TO NEGLIGENT INDULGENCE." HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE FULL VIGOR OF THE LAW SHOULD BE APPLIED AGAINST ANY GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL, PERSON OR ORGANIZATION THAT VIOLATES NARCOTICS LAWS. THIS WAS BY FAR THE STRONGEST POLICY STATEMENT THAT TORRIJOS HAS ISSUED (FULL TEXT WAS TRANSMITTED BY PANAMA 3761).

2. TORRIJOS' LETTER HAD AN IMMEDIATE IMPACT. KNOWN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS ARE BEING ARRESTED AND EVEN THOUGH THEY MAY NOT HAVE NARCOTICS IN THEIR POSSESSION AND EVIDENCE IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO WARRANT CONVICION ON SPECIFIC NARCOTICS CHARGES, THEY ARE BEING TRIED UNDER A GOP "ANTI-SOCIAL LAW" AND SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR TWO YEARS. THIRTY-TWO KNOWN AND PERSISTENT MIDDLE AND LOW LEVEL TRAFFICKERS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED. TWENTY-ONE OF THESE HAVE ALREADY BEEN SENT TO COIBA ISLAND PENAL COLONY FOR TWO YEARS. (CONFIDENTIAL).

3. IMPROVED NARCOTICS AND DRUG LAWS: PANAMA'S TOP NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT OFFICER, LT. COL. MANUEL NORIEGA, G-2 OF THE NATIONAL GUARD SENT A LETTER ON JULY 5 TO THE PRESIDENT OF PANAMA'S LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION, URGING THAT THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION CONSIDER COMPREHENSIVE LEGISLATION TO PLUG LOOP-HOLES IN PANAMA'S LEGAL STRUCTURE AND TO ENCOMPASS MEDICAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF DRUG ABUSE AS WELL AS ENFORCEMENT. IN THE LETTER IT SAID THAT PRESENT LAWS WERE INADEQUATE AND RECOMMENDED THAT THE COMMISSION APPOINT A COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE PROBLEM, AND EXAMINE LEGISLATION OF OTHER COUNTRIES. HE SPECIFICALLY OFFERED THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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MEDICAL, ENFORCEMENT AND LEGAL EXPERTS WHO HAVE BEEN DEALING WITH NARCOTICS AND DRUG PROBLEMS. THE LOOPHOLES TO WHICH NORIEGA REFERS, INCLUDE THE LEGAL SALE OF SOME POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS DRUGS BY PHARMACIES WITHOUT PRESCRIPTION. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE).

4. NATIONAL DRUG ABUSE PROGAM: ON JULY 17 IN PRESENCE OF U.S. DEA AGENTS, PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS UNVEILED A NATIONAL PLAN FOR COMBATTING DRUG ABUSE IN PANAMA. DURING THE MEETING PANAMANIAN OFFICIAL ADMITTED FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT PANAMA TOO HAS A DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM AMONG ITS YOUTH. THE PLAN INCLUDES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON NARCOTICS CONTROL AND SUBORDINATE COMMITTEES WORKING ON

DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM. ENFORCEMENT, EDUCATION AND HEALTH OFFICIALS ARE INVOLVED (SEE PANAMA 3909 FOR DETAILS).

5. NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT DRIVE IN COLON: THE NATIONAL GUARD AND DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS (DENI) CONDUCTED A CAMPAIGN AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS IN COLON DURING JULY AND MADE NUMEROUS ARRESTS ACCORDING TO INFORMATION RECEIVED BY DEA SAIC LELAND RIGGS. MAJOR CECILIO FISHER DIRECTED THE CAMPAIGN. AMONG THOSE ARRESTED WAS JOSE MANUEL PACHECO-BLANCO, A PANAMANIAN CUSTOMS INSPECTOR, ON BASIS OF ACCUSATIONS BY SEVERAL STUDENTS THAT HE HAD SOLD NARCOTICS AND MARIJUANA TO THEM. HE WAS ARRESTED ON JULY 8 AND ON JULY 9 WAS SENTENCED TO TWO YEARS IN COIBA PENITENTIARY.

6. MARIJUANA DISCOVERY: AGENTS OF THE DEPT. OF FISCAL INVESTIGATIONS DETAINED A LIGHT PLANE JULY 25 AFTER IT LANDED AT THE ENRIQUE MALEK AIRPORT IN DAVID, PANAMA ON A TRIP FROM MANAGUA, NICARAGUA. A PACKAGE OF MARIJUANA OF UNDISCLOSED SIZE WAS SEIZED FROM THE PLANE'S PILOT, GUNTER RUDI BRUNO, A GERMAN. THE DISCOVERY WAS MADE DURING A ROUTINE INSPECTION OF THE PLANE. (UNCLASSIFIED)

7. COLOMBIAN DRUG TRAFFICKERS JAILED: FIVE COLOMBIAN DRUG TRAFFICKERS WERE SENTENCED TO TWO YEARS EACH IN A COIBA PENITENTIARY. THE TRAFFICKERS ARE ENIB GONZALEZ, DIOMEDES PALACIO DIAZ, ROSALINO MOSQUERA, NERIS RIVAS, AND WILLIAM HURTADO POTES. THEY WERE CAPTURED BY DENI WHEN THEY ARRIVED CONFIDENTIAL

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ABOARD A SMALL SHIP NEAR CHEPO. THEY HAD BEEN KNOWN TO BE TRAFFICKING BETWEEN COLOMBIA AND PANAMA, USING CHEPO AS A LANDING SPOT. (UNCLASSIFIED)

8. U.S. NARCOTICS VIOLATOR DETAINED: DENI DETAINED U.S. NARCOTICS VIOLATOR IRMA SIMONS (REAL NAME RAMONA IRMA MENDOZA MENDOZA) PENDING DEPORTATION TO THE U.S. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

9. NEED FOR X SECRETARIAL HELP: WORK OF DEA OFFICERS IN PANAMA IS SERIOUSLY HAMPERED BY TOTAL LACK OF SECRETARIAL HELP. BOTH AUTHORIZED POSITIONS ARE VACANT. WE URGE DEA TO ASSIGN SECRETARIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. (UNCLASSIFIED)

10. CANAL ZONE: ACTING ON INFORMATION PROVIDED BY DEA OFFICIALS, CANAL ZONE AUTHORITIES SEIZED 851 POUNDS OF HASHISH BRICKS IN THE POSSESSION OF A COUPLE FROM CALIFORNIA. THEY WERE KATHLEEN DIANE ELDER AND FRANZ MICHAEL SMITH, RESIDENTS OF SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA. THEY HAD BEEN UNDER SURVEILLANCE SINCE THEIR DEPARTURE FROM THE U.S. THEY ARRIVED IN PANAMA FROM COLOMBIA ABOARD A BOAT WITH THE HASHISH HIDDEN IN COMPARTMENTS

OF THEIR MOBILE HOME. IT WAS THE LARGEST HAUL OF NARCOTICS  
EVER MADE IN THE CANAL ZONE. (UNCLASSIFIED).  
SAYRE

CONFIDENTIAL

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GOV PAN CANAL  
GUATEMALA  
MANAGUA  
SAN JOSE  
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